



OLD SACRAMENTO STATE HISTORIC PARK GENERAL PLAN AND EIR

PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1 OCTOBER 6, 2010, 5:30-7:30 PM

MEETING SUMMARY

Approximately 40 people were in attendance at the first public workshop for the Old Sacramento State Historic Park (OSSHP) General Plan, kicking off a series of workshops that will be held to support the General Plan development process. The purpose of the first public workshop is to gather public input on the issues and concerns and the vision and ideas that can improve the future use and management of OSSHP.

Cathy Taylor, District Superintendant of the Capital District State Museums and Historic Parks, opened the meeting on the boardwalk of the Big Four building, by welcoming workshop attendees and orienting them to the surrounding grounds and facilities of OSSHP. The planning area for the park includes properties owned or leased by State Parks in Old Sacramento and approximately 17-miles of a historic railroad right-of-way that extends south from OSSHP along the bank of the Sacramento River. The workshop was then continued inside the Stanford Gallery with introductions of State Park staff, Advisory Committee members including technical team leaders, and General Plan consultants represented by AECOM and Fehr and Peers. Workshop participants were asked to be seated at tables according to the color of their name badges, handed to them when they signed in for the workshop.

Ms. Taylor then introduced Allen Folks, representing AECOM, the consultant for the OSSHP General Plan to lead the project presentation alongside several key advisors for the project (refer to Public Workshop #1 Presentation). Mr. Folks gave an overview of the purpose of the workshop. Steve Musillami, the key advisor for the State Parks Planning Division, explained what a general plan is intended to achieve and why one is needed for OSSHP. He highlighted the need to proactively plan for the future of the park at a time when a lot of change is happening around this part of the Downtown Sacramento area. Mr. Folks continued the presentation by outlining the purpose of the EIR, what the General Plan and EIR process will follow in the upcoming year, highlighted the location and site characteristics of the project, and the park's demographics. The presentation was followed by Marcia Eymann, the technical leader on the project in Gold Rush and Sacramento history, to provide an overview of the historic significance of Old Sacramento from its early days as a commercial post and tent settlement for miners and merchants during the Gold Rush period. Kyle Wyatt, the project's technical leader in railroad history and technology, followed with an overview of the historic significance of the Railroad in Old Sacramento, serving as the western

terminus site of the transcontinental railroad. The project presentation ended with questions for the public and table discussions regarding opportunities for the future of OSSHP. Workshop attendees in their respective table groups were asked to respond to five discussion questions. A facilitator and recorder for each table assisted workshop participants in understanding the intent of the questions, recorded comments suggested by the group, and ensured everyone had an opportunity to be heard. The questions and comments heard from the table discussions at the workshop are summarized in the “Key Themes Summary” below. The more extensive list of comments recorded during the workshop are included in the “Table Discussion Comments” that follow.

KEY THEMES SUMMARY

Vision and Proposed Uses for OSSHP

- **As a Living History Site.** Preserve the historic authenticity of the Gold Rush era and make this experience come alive for visitors to OSSHP. Recreate the 1849 Scene, develop a Gold Rush museum, and formalize the Eagle Theatre as a theater for visitor orientations and programs that enhance the experience of OSSHP.
- **Connect to the River and Interpret the Riverfront.** The riverfront is currently underutilized and can play more of a role in interpreting the river history including the shipping of freight and goods, passenger transportation, and commerce that took place along the Sacramento River. More waterfront commercial development, recreated wharves, a floating museum, and recreational activities were all suggested uses along the riverfront/ banks.
- **Extend the Rail Line but Use Clean Energy.** Interest was expressed for extending the rail line south however there was also concern heard for the air pollution generated by steam engines as it passed through the community. Alternative energy sources for running the train should be considered.
- **Uncover the Past.** Expose the archaeological remains of the 1849 scene and expand the underground tour for archaeological interpretation.
- **Places for Events.** Create dedicated spaces for events that can better serve that purpose and improve the experiences and activities at OSSHP.
- **Connect to Museums and other Cultural Destinations.** Tie the experience and history of OSSHP to other historic park units and museums in the city to tell the history of Sacramento. Connect or draw activities such as Second Saturdays into Old Sacramento.
- **As a Gateway to California.** Make OSSHP a gateway, central location, or welcome center in the city to Gold Rush history and other visitor destinations in California.

- **Alternative Transportation Options.** Promote the use of alternative transportation options including biking, walking, and taking public transit to the park. Improve the experience of the American River bike trails and riding the train to Old Sacramento. Consider providing areas for overflow parking during special events that are connected by streetcar and/or shuttle service.

Issues at OSSHP

- **Freeway.** The sight and noise of the freeway detracts from the experience of OSSHP. On the other hand, it also protects and confines the park.
- **Traffic and Parking.** Pedestrians and traffic conflicts. Lack of free parking, high parking fines, and the convoluted access into Old Sacramento detract from the visitor experience of the park.
- **Lack of Attractions and Activities.** Regular events and activities spread out throughout the year, targeting both children and adults, are needed to draw people to Old Sacramento. A wow factor such as an amphitheater or event space, recreated 1849 Scene, floating museum, and more activities such as train rides, cruises, riverfront parks and recreational spaces, historic exhibitions, and evening activities are needed to enliven the park.
- **Lack of Interpretation.** More signage is needed to interpret the resources of the park with the aid of self-guided tour maps or other mobile interpretative devices. Provide interpretation for children as well as adults.
- **Authenticity of Structures.** Balance commercial development and modern visitor conveniences with preserving the historic authenticity of Old Sacramento. Upgrade the quality of the business district by promoting retail uses that are consistent with the character of the historic district.
- **Different Ownership.** Balance the commercial and historic interests of the park. Improve communication and coordination of activities between these two sides of Old Sacramento, educate merchants on the history of the park, support the retail in Old Sacramento, and advertise to promote the activities of the overall area.
- **Visitor-friendly public facilities.** Convenience facilities such as shade, open space, more accessible restrooms, bike facilities, and visitor centers or kiosks will improve the visitor experience.

Favorite Experiences at OSSHP

- **CSRM and Excursion Train Rides.** The CSRM and associated excursion train are the biggest attractions of the park and something unique to Old Sacramento. Build upon the success of these experiences.

- **Historic Architecture/Character.** The park's history and sense of a place in time is its strongest asset and should continue to be preserved and improved on.
- **Events.** Many events at the park are successful and attract large crowds. More regular events, improved event facilities, and more night time activities are desired to build on the potential that already exists in Old Sacramento.
- **Cruising the River.** The experience of sailing the river while enjoying a narrated tour of Sacramento history and scenic views of the Sacramento River.
- **Access to Bike Paths.** Old Sacramento is a Downtown gateway for the extensive and popular 33-mile American River bike trail.

Important Historical Themes at OSSHP

- **Railroad** – as the site of the transcontinental railroad, a significant part of the nation's history
- **Gold Rush** – the event that brought people here
- **Commerce** – the connecting activity from which the city grew
- **Agriculture** – the fertile region of the Sacramento Valley was a source of living for early settlers and continues to play a significant role in the economy of the valley
- **River and River Access** – as an important early means of transportation and shipping for early settlers and miners to this area
- **As a Diverse, Cosmopolitan Community** – from the onset of the city's early development, it attracted an ethnically and culturally diverse community
- **Archaeology** – as one of the few places where the historic remains of the city can still be uncovered and provide a glimpse into the past
- **Pony Express** – as the historic site of the western terminal delivering express mail service from the east coast, a significant event in our nation's history
- **As a Transportation Nexus** – the site of dramatic revolutions in transportation technology (stage coaches, steamboats, railroads, etc.) that transformed the Sacramento region; today, this part of the Downtown is still a nexus for continued transportation improvements
- **Skid Row/Redevelopment** – as part of the history and story of the transformation of Old Sacramento

TABLE DISCUSSION COMMENTS

Question 1: What is your vision for OSSHP?

Red Table

- Extension of railroad line to Hood
- CA Gold Rush museum to the caliber of CSRM
- Preserve the historic integrity for the landmark district
- The whole area needs to be considered
- Embodies the excitement and spirit of early Sacramento through authentic facilities and programs that interpret the Gold Rush through early years of the Transcontinental Railroad
- River and River Traffic- Hood by rail, back by steamboat
- Transportation
- How did people get here?
- Underground in the 1849 scene; stunning archaeological site no one can see-excavate

Orange Table

- Very little interpretation
 - Use signage
 - Interpretation of birds that can be seen in the area
- Educating merchants; little information is available to merchants
- No real cohesiveness
- Communication is needed
- Wow factor
- Waterfront development
- No interpretation of the river
 - Maintenance and access
 - Relates to history
 - What about tours?

- Hard to get to
- Other cities take advantage of the river
- Pedestrian access
- Floating museum is a good idea
- Old Sacramento is not yet a commercial success
 - Needs iconic factors
 - Park area with trails

Yellow Table

- More connection with the river
 - Opportunities to get down to the river
- Integrate the American River and the railroad to Old Sacramento
- Improve the CSRM
 - Bring the railroad technology component back to the CSRM
- Need for stronger connections between State Park facilities
- Facilities along the rail line
- Dinner train to Hood
- Connection to other historic park units in the area
- Improve pedestrian connections to Old Sacramento that takes advantage of the view to the river
- Promote tourism

Green Table

- Build 1849 scene one building at a time
- Rebuild prison ship
- Rebuild wharves (north of present), a couple of reproductions of river boats, historic exhibits
- Bring back the Delta Queen

Blue Table

- Preserve/enhance statewide and national significance
- Gateway/ central location
- Jumping off point for all California
- Comprehensive of all cultures
- Center of commerce
- Destination to learn, recreate, and experience
- Change in type of retail- uniqueness
- Visitor survey for retail

Purple Table

- Sovereign Hill in Australia as an example- pay to get in; actors are dressed up
- Colonial Williamsburg- example of living history
- Railroad is “elephant in the corral”
- International center for history, be bold, be proud of it
- Each part of the history is significant; right now there is a railroad bias
- Celebrate the waterfront
- Riverfront park is underutilized; park is unknown
- Interpret natural features of the riverfront
- Waterfront has its own historic value
- Add recreation to the river- swimming?
- What about the history before the Gold Rush?
 - Represent all people in California

Question 2: What are the major concerns and issues in Old Sacramento and how would you solve them?

Red Table

- Noise- freeway
 - Sound walls on the freeway

- Traffic and cars
 - Restrict and confine
- Connecting to the river
 - Build docks north on I Street bridge
- Lack of interpretation
 - More plaques/signage
- Non-state park property is not attracting people to the park; historic integrity is not being protected
 - Attract a different kind of tenant
- Lack of attraction for children needs to be considered
 - Changing the landscape- ground cover, etc.
- Transportation is not represented; horse drawn carriages do not go into the park
 - Exhibition of horse drawn vehicles
- Safety at night
 - Zoning and tenancy

Orange Table

- Ingress/egress problems
 - Not convenient
 - Wayfinding issues
 - Type of paving should be considered
- Sound wall- avoid 2nd Street; too loud
- Traffic problems- pedestrian vs. parking; local want free parking
- What if it was totally historic?
- Metered parking vs. parking structure
 - Mixed feelings
- Shuttle/trolley esp. on Second Saturday
- Parking structure is underutilized
- Riverwalk in West Sacramento
- More activity in Capitol Mall

- Redo east and west entrances
- Need continuity
- 1849 scene underutilized
 - No shade

Yellow Table

- Railyards development- character and connectivity
- Authenticity of Old Sacramento
- Maintain open space for large events
- Facilities for special groups such as boy scouts
- Lack of restrooms and signage identifying their locations
- Map identifying historic structures and their authenticity/type of interpretation (reconstructed vs. original structures)

Green Table

- Encourage Old Sacramento merchants & employees to dress in simple “period costumes at least on weekends/holidays
- Too many t-shirt shops; improve the quality of shops in Old Sacramento
- Self-guided tours of Old Sacramento (via cell phone)
- Public facilities (restrooms, etc.) open after 3:30
- Knowledge of intro program to Old Sacramento (Eagle Theater); get info out
- Represent historic horse auction at K Street and Front

Blue Table

- Balance commercial with historic waterfront story not represented
- No knowledge of Jed Smith/ American River bike trail
- Sacramento is primed for bicycle traffic
- Access to Old Sacramento by car, rail, foot, bicycle; access from south and north
- I Street bridge access- railroad crossing, poorly marked, sharp curve is bad for bikes
 - Bike parking

- Parkway safety for bicyclists
- Front Street on 1849 scene is a dead zone
- Homeless issues
- Replace steam engine with solar “fireless” locomotive

Purple Table

- Split ownership- merchants, state
- Interpret Old Sacramento as a whole
- Need more street festivals and active events
- Parking, gold rush days fill up parking
 - Streetcar linking to parking or free shuttle
- Other ways to get around than cars; consider getting rid of cars in open space
- Parking fines
- Excursion train is a problem: dirty steam engine, noise, traffic, safety, proximity to houses, and chemical tanks but the train is an important part of the experience
- Underground connection to other side of tracks is a good idea
- Wish the train went all the way to Hood; wish it went further at least an hour
- Reallocate money from train
- What about an electric train?
- Turn rail into trail
- Trolley is an alternative
- Need to define a primary interpretative period
 - 1848-1852 or what is most important?

Question 3: How would you use the physical plant (grounds, buildings, and railroad) within the park?

Red Table

- Capturing boutique hotels and B&B's developed in an authentic way
- Build out the 49er scene- expose the archaeological site
- Control the environment so you can control the sounds

- Museum that is true to the experience
- Amphitheater- open air
- Visitor's center for Old Sacramento, library in CSRM
- More attractive and historically accurate
- More access for private boats, etc.
- Upgrade business district
- More things like Ebner, etc.
- Moving or restoring the railroad line

Orange Table

- Integrate development required
- Place for events (e.g. street performance) but need proper location
- Do not need passenger station
 - Physical plan change
- Commercial-wise, Old Sacramento is underperforming
- Parking needs to be replanned
- 1849 scene needs to be rethought
- River - access, visibility
- Work with city
- Can the park be a regional destination by tying with museum?
 - An urban destination
 - Commercial draw
- Need more public restrooms
 - Facilities that are open at different times

Yellow Table

- Build on the strength of the existing facilities
- Reopen the freight depot
 - Reopen the Silver Palace restaurant
 - More concessions

- Activities for children
- Hands-on activities
- Expansion space for the CSRM facilities
- Theater in the theatre

Green Table

- Horse car
- Living history events- pick a single year to represent
- Historic authenticity

Blue Table

- New river museum to highlight history and use (including current use/issues)
 - Floating museum; may be down river with trail access
- Some businesses in State Parks; some museum in the business district
- Family friendly museums
 - Wagons and things for kids
- Gold Rush Museum
 - Enhance Sac Museum for Gold Rush
- Farmer's Market
- Keep some open space; partial build out of 1849 scene or use Front Street as open space
- Trees along streets
- More interpretative signing so that you know what you're looking at and maintain existing signs
- Ban cars- Front Street, J Street, & K Street; keep 2nd Street open and access to alleys

Purple Table

- Fill in area with historic buildings on half block out front
- Recreate 1848-52, narrower period

- Pedestrian-friendliness is important
- Don't tear anything down; just add more
- More access to the river
- Generate more foot traffic by having things happening
- Make it more of a tourist destination
- Living history- demonstrate trades
- Pony Express office
- More programming related to the theme (like Williamsburg)
- Improve bikeway on N side; native vegetation
- Relocate school house; not authentic
- More permanent exhibits i.e. blacksmith

Question 4: What is the strongest attribute of the park, or what is your favorite experience in Old Sacramento?

Red Table

- The River
- Rio City Grille
- Authentic resources that lie underground/ Underground Tour
- Delta King- staging on it because of the river
- Cruising the river
- Sacramento Southern Railroad excursion train
 - Motor car down to Hood

Orange Table

- Railroad museum
- Horse-drawn carriage event
- Different programs from Railyards
- Focused on elementary schools
- How to get people down here?
 - A big event once a month

- An amphitheater- a big stage; outdoor concerts
- Theater nights
- Big events may need street closure
- Food vendors vs. existing restaurants
- Polar Express

Yellow Table

- CSRM
- Excursion train
- Historic boats/ features

Green Table

- Railroad museum
- Gold Rush museum
- Jazz Festival success
- New Year's family events
- Christmas- historic theme on streets
- Get modern businesses with historic roots and/or museums here to open operations

Blue Table

- CSRM
- Sacramento Southern
- Bike Path
- Connection with the river
- Historic building flavor
- Special Events
 - Jazz fest
 - Gold Rush Days
 - Pony Express
 - Delta King

Purple Table

- Bird watching
- River is underutilized
- Railroad museum
- Emphasize significance of Gold Rush
- Historic structures
- Architecture is strength; programming is weakness
- Interface of different activities is strength
- Gold Rush days every day
- Major hub for scheduled groups

Question 5: What are the most important historical themes in Old Sacramento? How do you see them working together to highlight the rich history of Old Sacramento?

Red Table

- Railroad theme as strongest
- Gold Rush- what brought people here
- Create a new theme or connection that embodies railroad, gold rush, and transportation such as commerce
- Sacramento was born in 1849; railroad was not around for another 20 year while the city was built
- Agriculture; river boats
- Commerce: encompass all aspects
- Cosmopolitan community: diversity
 - Ethnically, culturally diverse
 - Coming together for the purpose of commerce
 - Irish, Swedish, Turks, Germans, Native Americans
- Interaction i.e. children's activities
- Landscape improvements
- Horse being groomed; stage coach rides

Orange Table

- Railroad museum
- Gold Rush- needs to be more significant
- Reenactments of history
- Enactments happen now; constrained location
- Interpretative tour

Yellow Table

- Railroad
- Interpretation of the archaeology
- Flooding

Green Table

- Events with integrity and consistent historical dates with the Gold Rush and Railroad themes
- Eliminate street traffic in Old Sacramento at least on weekends
- Historic information/handouts with merchant coupons
- Promote local shopping in Old Sacramento
- Non-shopping experiences in Old Sacramento including music/entertainment
- 49er scene- 1849 scene at the original level; 1860's, 1870's facades; mural of levee/river

Blue Table

- Gold Rush
- Transcontinental Railroad
- Commerce
- Pony Express
- Skid Row/Redevelopment
- I-5
- Sacramento was a nexus for transportation

- River and Gold Rush
- Railroad

Purple Table

- River
- Gold Rush
- Railroad
- Steamboats
- Ethnic Groups
- History of 1960's- putting freeway in
- Center for community celebrations
- Jazz festival
- Pan Pacific festival
- Freeway protects Old Sacramento; provides a buffer

Extra Question: Should there be a new model for how OSSHP and Old Sacramento are managed to facilitate coordinated decision-making, governance, maintenance, and operations?

Purple Table

- Joint powers authority
- Needs overarching governance structure; continuity
- Buy buildings and convert them to historic uses
- Need for commerce and residents